A REVIEW OF THE Affairs of *FRANCE*:

Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *News-Writers* and *Petty-Statesmen*, of all Sides.

Tuesday, June 27. 1704

Of the true Causes of the present Greatness of the French *Power.*

I AM not so arrogant to undertake to give an Account here of all the Causes of the present Grandeur of *France*; there may be some which I am not sensible of; there may be some which I am not Master of History enough to have known; for I never pretended my Knowledge, to be universal or my Judgment infallible; there may be some conceal'd in the Reason and Nature of Things, which no Man has yet guest at; there may be some conceal'd behind the dark Curtains of Inscrutable Providence, which I nor any Man else have ever yet seen, or had Room to guess at, or the least Circumstance to guide us into the Knowledge of.

'Tis hard I should be under the Necessity of making such a Cautionary Exception, but since I have almost as many Opponents as Readers of this Paper, some of whom to requite me for just Exceptions against their Morals and Scandalous Lives, and who by Way of Return for their Nonsence, are ready to object against every thing they see: 'Tis for their Sakes I am oblig'd to make long Digressions, and place needful Cautions in the Front of almost every Paragraph, to let them know where they think they have me; I saw it as well as they; 'tis for their Sakes I am oblig'd to give Reasons for what all Historians in the World have taken the Liberty to do, without asking the Leave of their Readers or making Apologies for.

This might have serv'd for an Answer to a Querulous Peevish Enquirer, whose Two First Questions are reply'd to in the entertaining Part of our last Paper, *Whether we do not mistake Preamble for History*; but as the Examples I might give in this Case among our best Historians will fully justifie me, without farther insisting on the particular Circumstances of the Author, the Writer, the time I write in, or the Persons that read; I refer the judicious Reader to the several Histories of Sir *Walter Raleigh*, the Bishop of *Sarum*, and any either antient or modern, whom they please to quote for me.

This premis'd, I come farther to explain my self thus, That when I write of the Causes of the *French* Greatness, I would be understood to mean of such Causes as are plain and undeniable as to Circumstances, and such as arrive within the Compass of my Reading and Observation; leaving all the World to guess at, produce or propose other or farther Reasons.

The First Reason I shall give for the Rise and Progress of the *French* Grandeur, is the Folly of their Neighbours.——

I might easily fill a large Volume of these Reviews in reckoning up the Numerous Instances of this Sort; and 'tis but too true that this Article presents us with more than half the just Steps and Additions to the present Height of *French* Glory.

'Tis confess'd that a watchful Eye over our Mistakes to take and improve the Advantages, is the Part the *French* have dexterously acted, and of which I shall speak by it self; but their Policy is not half so conspicuous, in laying hold of the Occasions given, as our Imprudence and Negligence is in giving the Opportunity.

Among the false Steps which most of the Princes of *Europe* have taken, and of which the *French* have made their particular Advantage, I should seem Partial if I laid the Stress in one Place more than another, and therefore I shall begin at Home.

If I should say any Nation has contributed more to the Greatness of this Monarchy than the *English*, I should go against the general Knowledge of the Affairs of *Europe*, and belye universal Experience; and if I should undertake to tell all the particular Steps which have been taken here either negligently, wilfully, or wickedly to promote it; I should be forc'd to turn the History into a Satyr upon *English* Management; I must come at last to writing Characters, fill my Account with R—s instead of Heroes, and throw so much dirty Truth in the Faces of Men of Mark, that some might resent it, and the Paper have the Misfortune to die in the Scuffle.

And yet the known Truth cannot be hid; I can never go thro' the Article without it; the Book will be imperfect, the Story be told by Halves, the Account be call'd a Blunder, and the Author a Fool.

If I can therefore follow Truth close at the Heels, without a kick on the Face, 'twill be well; if I can't, I see no Remedy, I must venture.

In the Time of *Hen.* IV. of *France*, when he had finish'd the Civil Wars, dissolv'd the Catholick League, beaten the *Spaniards* out of the Kingdom, follow'd them into *Flanders*, taken *Dourlans*, and at last happily ended the War by the Peace of *Virvins*. In this Time *France* began to breathe, she had been miserably ravag'd for 40 Years by the Catholick League, and Nine Civil Wars with the *Hugonots*; she had felt the Fury of the *Spanish* Armies on one Hand, and the *Germans* on the other; Foreign Troops were frequently call'd to the Assistance of either Side, and always paid themselves out of the Ruins of the Country: I cannot think *France* can have been said to be in a lower Condition, compar'd to the rest of *Europe*, at any time since the *English* quitted their Possessions there, then it may be said to be in at the Second Siege of *Paris*, or at least about the Time of the Surrender of *Roüen* to the King.

But when all this ended, that Politick Prince set himself as vigorously to promote the real Prosperity of the Kingdom in Peace, as he had before pursued the Possession of it by the War.— He alter'd the Measures of Government, and settled a new Polity; he corrected the Errors of former Management, encourag'd every thing whether in Civil Arts or Military, that might improve his Country; and having laid a Design of Universal Monarchy, and Drawn vast Schemes for the subjecting Great part of the World, he fell by the hand of a Murtherer, in the midst of Prodigious Preparations, and left *Europe* in a profound Peace, which he was just going to involve in a Bloody and Dangerous War.

The few Years of Peace, which *France* enjoy'd under the Politick Government of this Wise Prince, made a sensible Encrease in her Power, and the Figure she began to make in the World, was every way considerable, and like to be Formidable to her Neighbours. I touch these things but lightly here, because I shall be oblig'd to a more Particular Account of them in another Chapter.

Lewis XIII. the Son of this Glorious King, was a Weak Unsteady, and Unactive Prince, and the Nation felt a sensible loss under the Factions of the Court, and a long Minority of the King; and had not Cardinal *Richlieu* a Genius fitted for such a Juncture, come into the management of Publick

Publick Affairs, *Lewis* XIII. was as fit a Prince to have ruin'd his Kingdom, as *Hen.* IV. was to advance it.

England was under the Government of King *James* I. whose Character was not Extraordinary at Home, whatever the Flattery of Courtiers made him believe, and worse Abroad: His abandoning the Intereſt of the King of *Bohemia* was a Scandal to the *Engliſh* Nation, and brought them and their King into the utmoſt contempt ——— And tho' ſome People may think it Difficult for me to make out, that the quitting the Intereſt of that Prince was an advantage to *France*, they muſt give Me leave to ſay I am of a contrary Opinion; for had the Battel of *Prague* gone againſt the *Emperor*, and the *Palſgrave* been ſettled in the Kingdom of *Bohemia*, the *Engliſh* Line had been ſo planted in *Germany*, that we were in a fair way in Conjunction with the *Sweeds*, to have mated *France* and the *Houſe of Auſtria* too; but the *Emperor*, by Beating King *Fredrick* at the Battel of *Prague*, grew ſo Potent, that all the Princes of *Germany* ſunk under his hand; and Count *Tilly* Ravaged the Circles of *Weſtphalia*, and the Lower *Saxony*, even to the Borders of the States of *Holland*.

This exceſſive Power of the *Houſe of Auſtria* rouſed the King of *Swedeland*, who then made his famous Expedition into *Germany*; and the prodigious Succeſs of that Prince having perfectly humbl'd the *Emperor* *France* falls in, and makes Her Advantage of the War; and as the *French* took *Briſac* by the Army under Duke *Bernard*, of *Saxe-Weymar*, they ſecured to themſelves large Encroachments in *Alſatia*, and upon the *Rhine*, and grew very conſiderably in Power under this Diſaſter.

'Tis plain here, That had King *James* aſſiſted the King of *Bohemia*, and Eſtabliſhed Him in the Throne, as any King in *Europe but he*, would have done, all *Bohemia*, *Maravia*, *Sileſia*, and both the Palatinates, had been now Proteſtant; the Proteſtants in *Germany* had been Maſters of the *Empire*; neither the *Emperor* had been their Terrour then, nor *France* now.

By this *Engliſh* Errour, the Proteſtant Religion was loſt, to three large Countries, the Emperor made prodigious ſtrong, ſo that God was oblig'd, if we may ſay ſo, to work a Miracle for their Deliverance, in ſending *Guſtavus Adolphus*; and the *French* made their Market of the Quarrel.

I think this is plain; and here any one may obſerve, what I ſhall have occaſion to Note very often in the Courſe of this Hiſtory, That the Proteſtant Religion has been Extirpated from no Country, but where the ſupine Negligence and Backwardneſs of the People themſelves, have Contributed to their Deſtruction, equally the Power of their Enemies.

ADVICE from the Scandalous CLUB.

OUR Society, like *Hudibras*, with his Story of the Bear and the Fiddle, which was broke off in the middle, ended juſt in the Center of a Story; the Printer ſaying there was Copy enough, *tho' it prov'd a Miſtake*; and an impatient Gentleman that muſt be Anſwered without fail, was obliged to ſtay till to day for a Reply, to the reſt of his *Queries* ———, his third *Query* comes now to hand.

3. *Whether it be not abuſive in your Scandalous Society, to Reflect upon, and openly Correct Magiſtrates, as the L — M — and Aldermen of this City.*

4. *Whether any Man may not as well do the ſame; and if ſo, then.*

5. *Whether we are not come to a fine Paſs?*

Theſe Queſtions, if the Enquirer had pleaſed, might have been put all into one, as they are here; and therefore I take the Liberty to Anſwer them under one Head.

The Enquirer Treats my Lord Mayor and the Magiſtrates in his Paper, with more Ill-manners, than our Society ever did; we told the World once before, we deſired to have the Liberty of Explaining our own Meaning: Now for this Gentleman, when we tell a Story, to ſay *Inuendo* my Lord Mayor, or *Inuendo* Juſtice .... or *Inuendo* Aldermen .... This muſt be with a deſign to Abuſe theſe Gentlemen, and to impoſe upon

on them, telling the World that the Coat fits them, and so make them wear it.

Tacitus has a saying, to which there hangs a Tale, *Et quia vera erant, etiam dicta credebantur*; the Case was this;

Some *Roman* Citizens were Accused for saying scandalous Things of the Emperor *Nero*, particularly *that he lay with his Mother*; Now tho' the Men had never said so, but it was a design to cut them off, yet the People were easily induc'd to believe they said so, because the thing it self was true—

Now how could this Gentleman believe that the things we said of the *Brewers* should reflect upon my L— M—, unless he will fly to *Tacitus*, and write a Satyr upon my L— M—, *for Brewing on Sundays*; we declare we know few *Brewers* but what do so, but we do not know my L—M—does so; and this Gentleman Condemns us meerly as the *Romans* did their Citizen, *quia vera erant.*

'Tis true, we said my L—M— is a *Brewer*, I hope his L———p won't take it for a Reviling the Ruler of the People; we therefore plead *not Guilty* as to the Fact, and yet we cannot but Answer the next Question with an Affirmative.

We are of Opinion, where Men Commit open Crimes, under the Character and Protection of Authority, and Punish those Crimes in others, the Law having no reach upon them; or in *English*, when Magistrates Commit the Vices they Correct; every Man has a Title to Complain; for the Injustice is General, and every Man is Injur'd; but what is this to my L— L—?

As for our being come to a fine Pass —, Indeed we are: When the Vitious Lives of Magistrates are come to such a Pass, that they should want to make use of their Authority, to prevent People saying the Truth of them.

6. His next Query ask'd, *Whether it be any Excuse to us to say, We relate only and Discourse upon Information?*

We Answer readily, *No, Sir*: and we have never Pleaded it; and if you have a mind to put us upon the Proof of any thing Related, you are Welcome.

7, 8. And because this Gentleman shall have a full Reply, his two last kind Queries shall not be forgot; *Whether my L— M— may not justifiably cause you, for your Offence, to be Whip'd in* Bridewell, *or at the Cart's A...., and whether it were not very well for my L— M— to do so? not only to cool your Brains by warming your Back, but chiefly to make you an Example to the rest of your Scribling Crew?*

Indeed Sir, your Wit here runs a-head of your Understanding; you ought to have had the Manners, first to have ask'd my L— M— that Question, not us, *whether he could justify it or not*; and if you had, he would certainly have told you No: and that he might with more Justice send you there, for your Impertinence, in pretending to concern his L———p in what he knows better, than to think himself ill us'd by.

And for your better Guidance for the future, we refer you back to a Story in our *Review*, N° 16. about a Gentleman that broke another Man's head in a *Coffee-house*, for saying he was the Person meant in the *Review*.

ADvertisements are taken in by *J. Matthews*, in *Pilkington-Court* in *Little Britain*.

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WHereas Notice has been given in the *Gazette*, and other Papers, of a Collection then making of all the remarkable Accidents of the late dreadful Storm; the said Book is now in the Press, and will be publish'd next Week, from the most Authentick Accounts sent up from almost all Parts of the Kingdom by several Curious Gentlemen, especially of the Clergy; according to the Invitations of the aforesaid Advertisements: Together with the particular Losses in the Navy. Printed for *George Sambridge* in *Little Britain*, and Sold by *J. Nutt* near *Stationers-Hall*.

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